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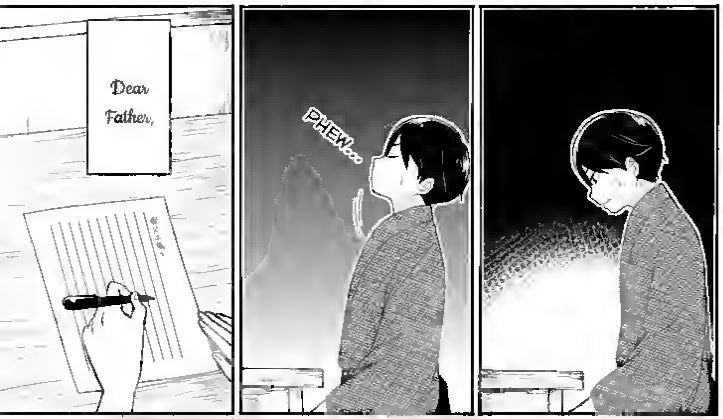
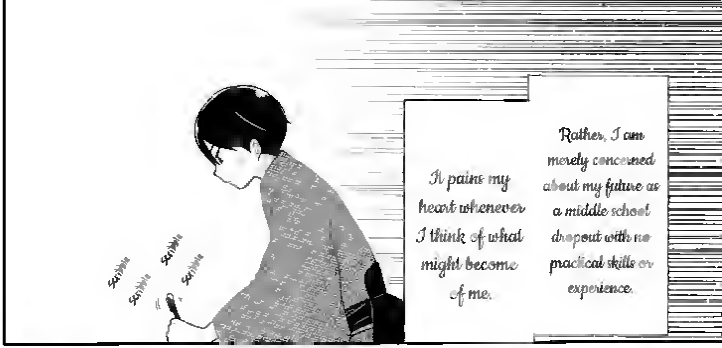
*TL NOTE: SHOKA = EARLY SUMMER. REFERS TO 4TH MONTH OF LUNAR CALENDAR.



Please don't be alarmed as I have no intention of studying advanced philosophy or science and become an influential academic.
While it may go against your will of spending the rest of my life like a dead man, I am writing this letter because I have a strong desire to further my education.


Scribble
Scribble
Scribble
It pains my heart whenever I think of what might become of me.
Rather, I am merely concerned about my future as a middle school dropout with no practical skills or experience.

I will be eternally grateful if you could write me a reply soon.
Sincerely
Tamahuke
.....

THIS IS MY FIRST STEP TO BECOMING A MAN THAT CAN BRING YUZU HAPPINESS.
I WONDER IF FATHER WILL ALLOW ME TO GO TO SCHOOL...
NO I SHOULDN'T BE SO WEAK...
I ALREADY TOLD HIM ONCE THAT I WON'T GO...
SIGH

*TL NOTE: TRIBUTE TO CONFUCIUS "TO HAVE FRIENDS COME FROM AFAR, ISN'T THAT A JOY"

MMM?
YUZU, DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE ENVELOPS ARE...
IS THAT A LETTER FROM MIDORI-SAN?
WOW, HOW DID YOU KNOW?!
WELL, YOUR EYES GET ALL BIG AND SPARKLY
WHENEVER YOU GET A LETTER FROM MIDORI -SAN
TEE HEE
MIDORI-SAN WAS YUZU'S BEST FRIEND FROM WHEN SHE WAS IN THE ALL-GIRL'S SCHOOL.
THEY HAVE BEEN EXCHANGING LETTERS EVER SINCE SHE ARRIVED HERE

WHAT'S WRONG?
WOAAAAAH
EHHHHH
EHHHHH
W-WHEN DID SHE...
WHAAAT!

THAT'S SOMETHING
TH-
THEY SKIPPED RIGHT OVER TO IT?!
SEEMS LIKE SHE IS LIVING TOGETHER WITH HER PARTNER IN TOKYO RIGHT NOW.
I ONLY FOUND OUT THAT SHE WAS DATING SOMEONE IN THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, BUT SHE ALREADY...
WOW

MIDORI-SAN
SEEMS TO HAVE GOTTEN PREGNANT.
SO SHE'S GOING TO GET MARRIED.

YES.
YOU MUST BE DELIGHTED AS HER BEST FRIEND.

THEY MIXED UP THE ORDER A BIT.
BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT IT'S SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE.
CHUNRIE CHUNRIE
WOAH...

MIDORI-SAN AND I WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER SINCE WE FIRST ENTERED THE SCHOOL.
WE SHARED BOTH OUR JOYS AND OUR SORROWS.
I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET TO HAVE ANOTHER FRIEND LIKE HER.

I WILL SEND HER MY CONGRATULATIONS RIGHT AWAY!
I BET SHE'LL BE DELIGHTED TO HEAR FROM HER BEST FRIEND
YES!
I NEED TO SEND MY LETTER TO FATHER QUICKLY TOO
YEAH
AND LIKE THAT

DAYS PASSED
SHIMA -SAN- DELIVERY
SLIDE
HAVE A NICE DAY~
THANK YOU SO MUCH.

I COULD TRY THE PHONE... BUT FATHER IS ALMOST NEVER HOME...
SIGH
I'LL TRY ONE MORE TIME...
GUESS HE'S TELLING ME TO JUST STAY DEAD.
STEP
STEP

IT'S FOR YUZU.
STILL NO REPLY FROM FATHER.

YUZU.
THERE IS A MAIL FROM MIDORI-SAN.

.....
WHAT.

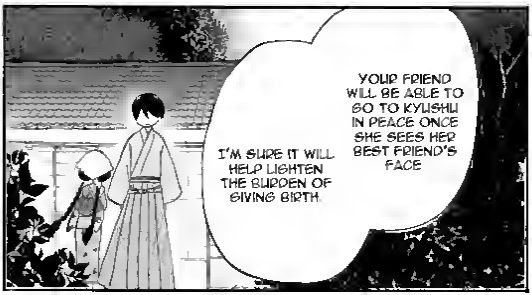
YAY
YAY
THANK YOU SO MUCH.

LET'S SEE HOW MIDORI-SAN IS DOING

WHAT'S WRONG?
THEY ARE GOING TO MOVE TO HER HUSBAND'S HOMETOWN IN KYUSHU
AND,
IF SHE GOES TO KYUSHU, WE MIGHT NEVER GET TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN,
SO SHE WANTS TO MEET FOR THE ONE LAST TIME....
.....
STARE...
WHA...
WHAT?
DIRECT
EHHH
THEN GO MEET HER.
YUZU...
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CHANGE AND MAKE FOOD
BUT YOU WANT TO GO SEE HER, RIGHT?
TAMAHIKO -SAMA, WILL YOU BE OKAY WITHOUT ME?
GRIP

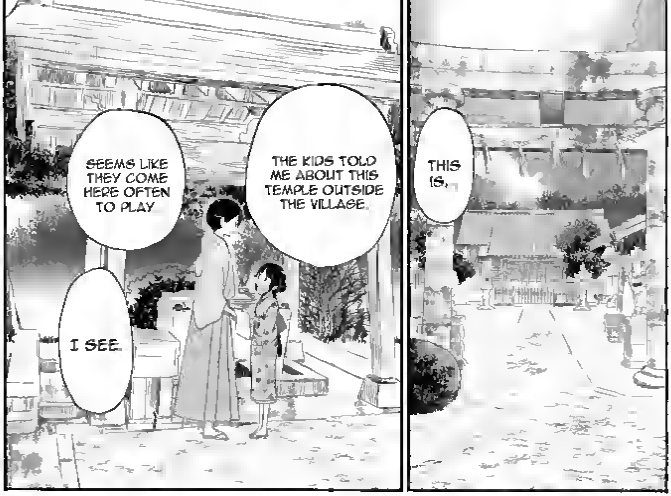
YOU SAID YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND ANOTHER FRIEND LIKE HER.
GO GIVE HER A VISIT.

STARE
WOR-RIED
WOR-RIED


YOUR FRIEND WILL BE ABLE TO GO TO KYUSHU IN PEACE ONCE SHE SEES HER BEST FRIEND'S FACE
I'M SURE IT WILL HELP LIGHTEN THE BURDEN OF GIVING BIRTH.

AHH, THAT'S RIGHT
?

NOW, NOW.
I AM NOT A CHILD...
I WAS LIVING ALONE FOR A WHOLE WEEK BEFORE YOU CAME.
I'LL BE FINE BY MYSELF IF IT'S JUST A DAY OR TWO.



*TL NOTE: OMAMORI = JAPANESE PAPER AMULET.

BLUSH
WE SHOULD COME AGAIN WHEN I GET A BABY TOO.
I'LL GO BUY THE OMAMORI.
PUFF...
SNAP
MMM...
TAMAHIKO-SAMA.

THANK YOU SO MUCH
I... WILL GO AND SEE HER!
I WILL DELIVER THIS OMAMORI TO MIDORI-SAN AND TELL HER TO GIVE BIRTH TO A HEALTHY BABY!
YEAH
AND SO...
1
NO MAIL AGAIN...
2
AFTER A FEW BUSY DAYS TO GET HER PREPARED,
WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?
A BELLY BAND
3
SHE'S EXCITED...
OH, IT'S THE KIMONO TAMAKO LEFT FOR YOU
5
6
7
YEAH, IT'S TOO BIG
LOOKS LIKE I NEED TO FIX IT UP A BIT
8
9
10

THEN, I'LL GET GOING
H-HOW DO I LOOK? AM I WEIRD?
IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE I PUT ON A HAKAMA
YES
WATCHOUT WHEN YOU TRAVEL...
*TL NOTE: HAKAMA = LONG DRESS WORN OVER A KIMONO
IT DOESN'T LOOK WEIRD AT ALL!!
I ALMOST DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOU!
BECAUSE IT'S REALLY CU-
-UTE
AH! THAT'S RIGHT
BLUSH
BLUSHHH!

I THOUGHT ABOUT IT. BUT FOODS GO BAD EASILY IN THE SUMMER
WHAT
RYO IS...
WHAAT!?
NYAAAAN
NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING FOOD
I ASKED RYO-SAN TO HELP YOU OUT WITH YOUR MEALS WHILE I AM GONE.
OF COURSE
AND RYO-SAN WAS SHOCKED TOO.
BUT I DON'T WANT TAMAHIKO -SAMA TO HAVE TROUBLE GETTING FOOD...
REMEMBER THE TERRIBLE THING SHE DID TO YOU!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE AGREED.
NO MOREOVER... ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH IT?
WHAT?!
WHY?!
I DON'T HATE YOU
TAKE CARE OF TAMAMIKO?
HOW CAN YOU ASK THAT TO A WOMAN THAT DID SUCH A NASTY THING TO YOU
DON'T YOU HATE ME?
I HAD, AN OLDER SISTER ONCE....

BUT BEFORE I WAS EVEN BORN,
WHEN SHE WAS JUST A BABY...
SHE GOT SICK FROM GETTING BITTEN BY A RAT AND PASSED AWAY
I WONDERED, MAYBE IF MY SISTER WAS STILL ALIVE,
WHEN I SAW RYO-SAN TAKE CARE OF YOUR SIBLINGS WITH SUCH LOVE.
IT REALLY WARMED MY HEART.
SHE WOULD HAVE TAKEN CARE OF ME LIKE THAT.....
you selfless fool
AND RYO-SAN APOLOGIZED TO ME PROPERLY.

YEAH YEAH~ LEAVE IT TO ME
THANK YOU SO MUCH
I'LL TAKE IT
ぱあ!?
WELL ...
YOU GUYS DID HELP OUT RYOTARO.
selfless fool...

THE TRAIN HEADING TOWARDS TOKYO WILL BE DEPARTING SHORTLY
YUZU HAD AN OLDER SISTER?
I DON'T KNOW
SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN A GREAT SISTER IF SHE HAD BEEN ALIVE
THAT'S YOU ALRIGHT
... AND THAT'S HOW I GOT HER TO AGREE.

THAT'S RIGHT BUT NOW I'M RELUCTANT ...
BUT YOU WERE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS
... I'LL MISS YOU
WHAT'S WRONG?
TAMAHIKO-SAMA .....
FOR ME TOO...
THAT'S THE SAME...
GRIP

WH-
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT IN PUBLIC!!
!
I-I'M SORRY

THAT WAS FROM A LONG TIME AGO...
WHY DID I DO THAT
WOAAAAH
P-PLEASE FORGET ABOUT IT NOTHING HAPPENED!
WOAAAAH
Pat
I'LL DO IT AS MUCH AS YOU WANT...
ONCE...
ONCE YOU ARE BACK HOME...
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT
THAT WAS ONE BOLD PROMISE I MADE THERE...
HU-HUM!
HU-HUM!
HU-HUM!
HU-HUM!
HAAA!
HAAA!